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Re-reading Jerome in Spain in the Middle Ages: The *Vida de San Paulo* and The Legend of Saint Paul of Thebes

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The scribes who reworked Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* into the sequence of vernacular Castilian manuscripts known as Compilation A (or the *Gran flos sanctorum*) were acutely aware of the nature of his endeavour. They knew that Voragine was a gifted storyteller, able to fathom and serve the predilections of ordinary believers. They knew that his narratives, uncluttered by unnecessary levels of abstract theological exegesis, focused on the most crucial and unforgettable deeds of the saints, presenting their lives and miracles in readily digestible capsule form. Yet they also recognized his limitations, and were prepared not merely to adjust the styling and emphasis of his compositions as they were reworked into the vernacular, but, on a relatively limited number of occasions, to treat the *Legenda* purely as an overarching frame text into which a series of more extensive readings, reworked from alternative Latin sources, could be interpolated.

Two familiar examples of this type of substitution can be seen with the *Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca*, which is reworked from the Latin of Paul the Deacon, and the *Istoria de la vida de Santa Ynés*, which sees Voragine's compressed treatment of Agnes rejected in favour of the more expansive and evocative account composed by Pseudo-Ambrose in the fifth century.¹ Other substitutions will almost certainly come to light as a greater number of the Compilation's constituent sections are edited and subjected to critical scrutiny. A text that has not yet received attention, however, is the *Vida de Sant Paulo*, a Castilian reworking of the legend of Saint Paul of Thebes composed by Jerome in the late fourth century.²

In some ways the *Vida de San Paulo* differs very little from Jerome's Latin original. The saint, horrified by the persecution of innocent Christian victims, takes himself off to the desert in order to lead a life of strict asceticism, where, many years later, he is found by Saint Antony, who eventually buries him with the help of two lions.

¹ For Paul the Deacon's Mary of Egypt, see "*La vida de Santa María Egipcíaca*": *A Fourteenth-Century Translation of a Work by Paul the Deacon*, ed. Billy Bussell Thompson and John K. Walsh, Exeter Hispanic Texts 17 (Exeter, 1977), and for Pseudo-Ambrose's Agnes, *The Legend of Saint Agnes in Medieval Castilian Literature*, ed. Andrew M. Beresford, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar 59 (London, 2007).

² The Compilation transmits most of Voragine's material along with approximately fifty additional hagiographic readings arranged in most manuscripts according to the structure of the liturgical-sanctoral cycle. These are accompanied by a series of substantial sections drawn from the writings of the Franciscan priest, Francesc Eiximenis (ca. 1340–1409). The full scope and content of the Compilation has not yet been adequately catalogued, but for studies of its formation and development, see Billy Bussell Thompson and John K. Walsh, "Old Spanish Manuscripts of Prose Lives of the Saints and their Affiliations, I: Compilation A (The *Gran flos Sanctorum*)," *La Corónica* 15 (1986–87): 17–28, Vanesa Hernández Amezcua, *Descripción y filiación de los "Flores Sanctorum" medievales castellanos* (Oviedo, 2008), 33–166, and Andrew M. Beresford, *The Severed Breast: The Legends of Saints Agatha and Lucy in Medieval Castilian Literature*, Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs (Newark DE, 2010), 15–57.

With the exception of a colophon (XIX) that frames the text as if it were a solemn reading suitable for delivery in the context of the liturgy, the Castilian version adheres slavishly to the structure and orientation Jerome's work and makes no attempt to interfere with its overall sense of narrative development.³ Its modifications, as is the case with the treatment of Agnes and Mary of Egypt, are generally quite subtle, and serve largely to clarify or expand for the benefit of its audience. Typical of its methodology of reworking is the content of the first few sentences of the Prologue (I), where "beato Elia" and "Joanne" (17) are rendered as "profeta Elías" and "San Johán Bautista" (2), while translations of the phrases "enim altius repetentes" and "sumpsere principium" (17) are omitted in the interests of economy. Equally noticeable is the transformation of "Antonius hujus propositi caput" (17) as "Sant Antonio fue el primero que se apartó a morar en el yermo" (6–7), which is typical of its emphasis on clarity. The overall effect, as is the case elsewhere in the Compilation, is the production of a particularly lucid and graceful version, which builds on Jerome's already formidable strengths whilst passing over his occasional moments of loose expression.

JACOBUS DE VORAGINE'S VERSION

The decision to replace Voragine's treatment of Paul by that of Jerome raises a number of significant questions. Voragine's account, which bears many of the hallmarks of his literary style, offers a pithy retelling of Jerome, embracing some aspects of narrative emplotment while discarding others. We cannot, of course, be certain that Voragine based all of his decisions directly on a reading of Jerome or whether some aspects of abridgement were inherited (as is the case elsewhere) from an intermediate source, extant or otherwise. As the curious arrangement of his text impacts on an understanding of the reasons for its replacement in the vernacular, however, it becomes important to consider its content and orientation.⁴

Voragine's version begins not with Jerome's expansive prologue, but a breathless attribution of authorship ("Paulus primus eremita, ut testator Hieronymus, qui ejus vitam conscripsit", 94) followed by a summary statement outlining the reason for Paul's claim to sanctity: "fervente Decii persecutione eremum vastissimum adiit ibique in quadam spelunca LX annis hominibus incognitus permansit" (94). The swiftness of this opening sentence, which effectively amalgamates the first two sections of Jerome's original (I–II), succeeds in sketching a basic understanding of Paul's significance, but is remarkably unsubtle in its approach, particularly with regard to Jerome's nuanced understanding of the delicate and controversial nature of Paul's position as the first of the great desert ascetics.

A similar type of truncation can be seen in the description of Paul's background

³ The *Vida* can be found in Escorial h–III–22 fols 95^{vb}–102^{vb} and Biblioteca Nacional 12688 fols 190^{ra}–97^{rb}. For Jerome's original, the *Vita S. Pauli primi eremita*, see Migne, PL XXIII cols 17–30. Roman numerals refer to Jerome's section numbering, which is maintained in the critical edition of the Castilian version included as an appendix.

⁴ For Voragine's *De sancto Paulo eremite*, see Jacobi a Voragine, "*Legenda aurea*": *vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, ed. Th. Graesse (Dresden, 1846), 94–95.

and family circumstances (IV), where Jerome offers details about his age and education: “Horum et aliorum poenis sanctus Paulus territus eremum petiit” (94). Most notable, however, is the account of Paul’s eremitic lifestyle (V–VI), which is eliminated in its entirety. This ensures that, in contrast to Jerome’s original, where the episodes serve as exposition for the central encounter with Antony, Voragine’s version says nothing about the nature of Paul’s life in the desert. Instead, it advances speedily to a description of Antony’s journey (VII–IX), which, rather more sensationally, is given over largely to a consideration of the animals that he meets along the way:

Eo tempore cum Antonius primum se inter monachos eremicolam cogitaret, in somnis alium se multo meliorem eremum colere edocetur. Qui dum eum per silvas inquireret, obvium habuit hippocentaurum, hominem equo mixtum, qui ei viam dextram demonstravit. Postmodum obvium habuit animal, ferens fructus palmarum, supra ymagine hominis insignitum, deorsum vero caprae formae habens. Qui dum ipsum per Deum conjuraret, ut sibi diceret, quis esset, respondit se esse Satyrum, Deum silvarum secundum errorem gentilium. Postremo obviavit ei lupus, qui eum ad cellam sancti Pauli perduxit. (94–95)

While Jerome focuses on the complexity of the relationship between Antony and Paul, using the animals to establish a series of telling oppositions, Voragine merely reproduces the most startling and marvellous aspects of his original. This decision is consistent with the shaping of the text elsewhere, notably the truncation of the meeting between Antony and Paul, where sections X–XI and XIV–XV are run together, and the elimination of four further sections, as the description of Antony’s return to the monastery (XII–XIII) and the lengthy concluding moral – where Jerome speaks in the first person, upbraiding those who, unlike Paul, immerse themselves in the hedonistic pleasures of the world (XVII–XVIII) – are omitted in their entirety. This leaves the lurid description of the fate of the martyrs in the garden (III), an episode that catalyzes Paul’s decision to embark on an ascetic vocation (but is of largely tangential significance), as the only portion of Jerome’s narrative to be preserved at anything like broadly equivalent length.⁵

Despite the interest in martyrdom, Voragine’s treatment of Paul is most notable for the material that he casts aside. The chief sacrifices are not simply in plot development and depth of characterization, but the significance that Jerome attaches to narrative events in the tendency to gloss actions and provide morals, whether they be

⁵ “Videns enim sanctus Paulus Christianis tot tormentorum genera irrogari in eremum aufugit. Eo siquidem tempore duo juvenis christiani comprehenduntur, quorum unus toto corpore melle perungitur et sub ardore solis aculeis muscarum et strabonum et vesparum lacerandus exponitur. Alter vero mollissimo lecto imponitur et in loco amoenissimo collocatur, ubi aëris erat temperies, rivorum sonitus, cantus avium et florum olfactus; funibus tamen floreis coloribus obtectis sic juvenis cingitur, ut manibus vel pedibus se juvare non posset. Adest quaedam juvencula corpore pulcherrima et impudica ac impudice tractat juvenem Dei amore repletum. Cum autem ille in carne motus contrarios rationi sentisset, non habens arma, quibus ab hoste se eruat, linguam propriam dentibus suis incidit et in faciem impudicae expuit et sic tentationem dolor fugavit et trophaeum laude dignum promeruit” (94).

implicit or explicit. This produces a more elementary narrative which, as Voragine's most astute critic has put it, ensures that "the rind of the account [...] is retained while most of the fruit is cast away."⁶

The reason traditionally given for such substantial pruning is the assumption that the *Legenda* was designed as a sourcebook for clerics, particularly Voragine's fellow Dominicans, who would have been expected, in the performative context of their sermons, to extrapolate relevant information and supply missing morals with the addition of whatever lessons or observations they considered appropriate. In this sense, his treatment of Paul could potentially be thought of not as a finished narrative, but as Reames rightly says, "a disconnected and often cryptic set of anecdotes."⁷

Perhaps the most significant implication, however, is that the qualities of Voragine's work make it suitable for a very specific audience. His saints, who are more wondrous than those of his originals, seem less recognizably human, and are in this sense less credible or accessible as literary creations. His penchant for the miraculous, on the other hand, reduces complex actions to simple proofs of greatness, while the elimination of tangential characters and motivations facilitates the establishment of a streamlined process of recognition and understanding. These reductive tendencies, which succeed in coaxing out lessons markedly less inclusive than those of his source texts, show that the *Legenda* was designed not to provide edification and reassurance for Christianity as a whole, but as an assault weapon suitable for inclusion in the preacher's arsenal.

Its aim in this respect was to serve, as Sherry L. Reames has shown, as a blunt means of inculcation for a relatively unsophisticated and potentially intractable segment of the public, which would have been bombarded with perceived spiritual truths in an attempt to lure errant souls from the twin attractions of heresy and secular pleasure. It is perhaps for this reason that Voragine insists so vehemently, as Reames argues, on the imposition of contrasting systems of punishment and reward, with the blessed revelling in the gift of divine protection and the iniquitous either mercilessly punished or left trembling at the judgement that awaits them.⁸

The rejection of Voragine's treatment of Paul should be read in this light not simply as the replacement of one text by another, but as an issue that reflects most pertinently on questions of context and reception, with the unlettered masses anticipated by the *Legenda* replaced by a more sophisticated and discerning public, able to engage with the theological intricacies of Jerome's original, but limited nonetheless to so doing in the vernacular. The text in this respect shares a point of contact with the version of the legend of Saint Agnes reworked from Pseudo-Ambrose, which is more intellectually demanding than Voragine's capsule version.⁹ A more telling comparison, however, can

⁶ Sherry L. Reames, *The "Legenda aurea": A Reexamination of its Paradoxical History* (Madison WI, 1985), 85.

⁷ *The "Legenda aurea"*, 87. A printed Castilian version (*De Sant Polo, primero hermitaño*) that gives a similar impression dates from 1472–75 and is included in the *Flos sanctorum con sus etimologías* (Washington, Library of Congress, Incunable X/F.59, fols 28^r–29^v).

⁸ *The "Legenda aurea"*, 197–209.

⁹ Beresford, *The Legend of Saint Agnes*, 31–39.

be made in relation to Paul the Deacon's treatment of Mary of Egypt, which offers a protracted examination of monastic asceticism in which the primary focus falls not on Mary, but Abba Zosimus, whose relationship to the former sinner is underpinned, as critics have long since recognized, by a series of borrowings from Jerome's treatment of Paul.¹⁰

The focus in both texts on the unique demands of monastic experience and ascetic withdrawal can be regarded in part as a product of the essentially monophyletic relationship between them, with Paul's encounter with Antony serving as a model for the relationship between Mary and Zosimus. The familiarity of both texts, however, free as they are from glosses and explanatory digressions, suggests at the same time that they were designed for use by an audience not simply versed in, but intimately familiar with the problems inherent in a life of monastic asceticism. Their orientation in this respect gives further credence to the assumption that the texts of Compilation A were designed for use within the monastery, where monks would have been expected to listen patiently and appreciate their content as they were delivered in the context of daily readings.¹¹

JEROME AND ATHANASIUS

The decision to favour Jerome over Jacobus de Voragine is not the only instance of replacement. Jerome's prologue, which is subtly modified in the *Vida*, casts doubt on the identity of the first desert hermit (citing Elias and John the Baptist as precursors) before rejecting Antony and replacing him with Paul. The text in this way establishes an element of tension, with the competing cults of Paul and Antony effectively presented as rivals. The specificity of Jerome's comments, however, is such that the rivalry is soon doubled, for by pausing to mention the fact that Antony's life has been written "con asaz diligencia [...] en latín como en griego" (17–18), he establishes a literary polemic, pitting his treatment of Paul not simply against Athanasius's Greek original, but Evagrius's masterly translation into Latin, the *Vita Antonii*.¹² The treatment of Paul should be seen in this respect not just as an attempt to promote the claims of one saint over another, but as an evaluation of authorial methodology and relative literary

¹⁰ Thompson and Walsh, "*La vida de Santa María Egipciaca*", xv–xvi. See also Joseph T. Snow, "Notes on the Fourteenth-Century Spanish Translation of Paul the Deacon's *Vita Sanctae Mariae Aegyptiacae, Meretricis*," in *Saints and their Authors: Studies in Medieval Hispanic Hagiography in Honor of John K. Walsh*, ed. Jane E. Connolly, Alan Deyermond, & Brian Dutton (Madison WI, 1990): 83–96.

¹¹ For the question of performance context, see Beresford, *The Severed Breast*, 31–57. Thompson and Walsh comment at length on the qualities of Paul the Deacon's work, but other than the assumption that Mary "warranted a more elaborate reading" (ix) and that Zosimus's piety "must have fulfilled some evasive thirst in the mediaeval audience" ("*La vida de Santa María Egipciaca*", xv–xvi), they do not consider why it was reworked or for whose benefit. For an application of Reames's findings to Spain, see Billy Bussell Thompson, "'Plumbei cordis, oris ferrei': la recepción de la teología de Jacobus a Voragine y su *Legenda aurea* en la Península," in *Saints and their Authors: Studies in Medieval Hispanic Hagiography in Honor of John K. Walsh*, ed. Jane E. Connolly, Alan Deyermond, and Brian Dutton (Madison WI, 1990), 97–106.

¹² The Castilian changes the main verb but is otherwise identical: "Igitur quia de Antonio tam Graeco quam Romano stylo diligenter memoriae traditum est" (18).

achievement.

The fact, of course, that Jerome is likely to have composed his treatment of Paul in 377, while lodging with Evagrius after his brief desert sojourn, adds spice to the relationship, for it becomes tempting to assume that his motivation for writing stems directly from a reading of the *Vita Antonii*. His claims in this respect are audacious: Antony, celebrated throughout the Christian world as a renowned ascetic and founder of desert monasticism, is relegated to a lesser hagiographic category, that of mere imitator, while his champion, Evagrius, is scolded for “siguiendo la opinión del pueblo” (6) and arriving in so doing at an erroneous and popularist judgement.¹³ Jerome’s host, one must assume, is in this way included somewhat disrespectfully amongst those who circulate tales that are “non creýbles e occiosas de contar” (15) or which could even be classified even “mentira [...] muy atrevida e sin vergüeña” (15–16).¹⁴ The narrator in this way subtly and adeptly combines the question of truth with the ability to represent it in writing and convey it with veracity to the audience, a technique that seems all the more brazen in view of the fact that, other than Jerome’s account, there is no historically corroborating evidence with which to confirm that Paul ever existed.¹⁵

To circumvent this problem, Jerome opts for a two pronged attack. By alluding to Macarius, he buttresses Paul’s claims in relation to the judgement of a hermit held in almost equally high esteem.¹⁶ Yet more intriguing is the reference to Amathas, who may have been the monk who buried Antony, but who is not mentioned either by Athanasius or Evagrius, whose evidence would be key in swaying the opinions of believers. *Auctoritas* aside, Jerome’s most potent weapon is literary, and although at first sight his comments on his inability to engage with certain aspects of Paul’s life through lack of talent or information may seem fatuous, they cannot be dismissed as mere *topoi*. On the contrary: by signalling the limitations of the author, he hits on a fundamental problem of representation, pitting Antony’s protracted and incredible battles against the devil (as represented by Athanasius and Evagrius) against material drawn from the beginning and

¹³ The *Vida* is all but identically expressed: “in quam opinionem vulgus omne consentit” (17).

¹⁴ The Castilian text embellishes through expansion: “et multa quae persequi otiosum est incredibilia fingentes. Quorum quia impudens mendacium fuit, ne refellenda quidem sententia videtur” (18).

¹⁵ Jerome comments acerbically on this issue in the prologue to his *Vita S. Hilarionis*: “Unde et nos favore magis illius, quam injuria, coeptum ab eo opus aggredientes, maledicorum voces contemnimus: qui olim detrahentes Paulo meo, nunc forte detrahent et Hilarioni: illum solitudinis calumniati, huic objicientes frequentiam: ut qui semper latuit, non fuisse; qui a multis visus est, vilis existimetur” (Migne, PL XXIII, col. 29). For studies of the dating, sources, and context of the production of the *Vita S. Pauli primi eremita*, see E. Coleiro, “St Jerome’s Lives of the Hermits,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 11 (1957): 161–78 at 177–78, J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London, 1974), 60–61, Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford, 1978), 106, Pierre Leclercq, “Antoine et Paul: métamorphose d’un héros,” in *Jérôme entre l’occident et l’orient*, ed. Yves-Marie Duval (Paris, 1988), 257–65, Carolinne White, *Early Christian Lives*, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1998), 73, Susan Weingarten, *The Saint’s Saints: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome*, *Ancient Judaism and Christianity* 58 (Leiden, 2005), 17–80, and Stefan Rebenich, “Inventing an Ascetic Hero: Jerome’s *Life of Paul the First Hermit*,” in *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy*, ed. Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl (Farnham, 2009), 13–27.

¹⁶ For a study of Macarius in the early Castilian canon, see Dwayne Carpenter, “An Egyptian Saint in Medieval Spanish Literature: St. Macarius the Elder,” *La Corónica* 8 (Spring 1980): 149–55.

end of Paul's life, but not its central portion. The result, in addition to establishing a further element of implicit criticism, is a strengthening of the suggestion that eremitism is solitary, unknowable, or even unrecordable, particularly from an authorial point of view. After all, if the hermit suffers alone in the vast silence of the desert, no narrative device, other than a potentially flawed author writing long after the event, is able to observe and record that suffering.¹⁷

MARTYRDOM AND ASCETICISM

The notion of reception dominates our understanding of the early portion of the *Vida*, where Jerome, himself writing long after the event, observes and records the suffering of two early Christian martyrs. The first, we are told, having been subjected to roasting and other ploys, is covered with honey and left to be bitten by ants while the second is tied up in a flowering garden (or *locus amoenus*) to be seduced by a prostitute. She, in a breathtaking break with decorum, uses both hands to prepare his member for coitus before straddling him.¹⁸

vino a él una muger pública muy fermosa e començólo a abraçar muy dulcemente e a lo tractar con las manos los mienbros varoniles turpemente por que, despertados los mienbros al deseo de la delectación carnal, se echase sobre él aquella muger, obradora de maldat. (44–47)

In response, the young man severs his tongue with his teeth and spits it in her face, a symbolic representation of the act of self-castration in which male corporeality, somewhat paradoxically, functions both as problem and solution.¹⁹

E veyéndose atado el cavallero de Jhesu Christo, e non se poder ayudar e ser vencido de la delectación, amonestado divynalmente en el coraçón, cortóse la lengua con los dientes e escupióla en la cara de aquella muger

¹⁷ “pensé de escrevir algunas pocas cosas del comienço e de la fin de Paulo el tebeo, non confiando de mi yngenio, mas por que non fuese ascondida la su vida a los avenideros. Non es *enpero* sabido de onbre bivo en *qué* manera bivió en la hedat de medio o *qué* tentaciones sufrió del enemigo antyguo e artero” (18–22). The Castilian text inverts syntactic units and achieves greater clarity by modifying names: “pauca de Pauli principio et fine scribere disposui: magis quia res omissa erat, quam fretus ingenio. Quomodo autem in media aetate vixerit, et quas Satanae pertulerit insidias, nulli hominum compertum habetur” (18–19).

¹⁸ The Castilian text omits Jerome's prudish embedded clause and is more direct in its discussion of the young man's member: “meretrix speciosa venisset, coepit delicatis stringere colla complexibus: et, quod dictu quoque scelus est, manibus attrahere virilia: ut corpore in libidinem concitato, se victrix impudica superjaceret” (20).

¹⁹ The *Vida* streamlines the content of its original to such an extent that it bears only a partial resemblance: “Quid ageret miles Christi, et quo se verteret, nesciebat. Quem tormenta non vicerant, superabat voluptas. Tandem coelitus inspiratus, praecisam mordicus linguam in osculantis se faciem expuit” (20). For a gendered discussion of this episode in the broader context of sanctity, see Beresford, *The Severed Breast*, 135–37.

As Virginia Burrus has argued, this seems a “queer” way to begin a text about asceticism.²⁰ Other critics have gone further, maintaining that it should be classified as a prurient digression, typical of Jerome’s obsession with sex, rather than a formal aspect of exposition.²¹ Its positioning at the start of the narrative proper, however, behoves the reader to take it seriously and understand how it establishes an additional element of tension, pitting public against private, martyr against ascetic, saint against author, and most importantly, Christian Egypt against pagan Rome.

The martyrs are certainly not chosen at random. The fact that they suffer extreme forms of physical torture is perhaps too obvious a link to seem worthy of comment. Less so is that events take place in a public setting, where the eavesdropping (if not voyeuristic) gaze of the narrator is able to focus with seemingly prurient satisfaction on the destruction of the corporeal body. This can perhaps be taken as an element of the traditionally symbiotic relationship between Christianity and Rome, with the former gaining momentum through the public visibility of its suffering, and the latter asserting control through gruesome performative display. Yet neither of the two martyrdoms is urban: the idyllic garden establishes an incongruous setting for sadistic violence, and appears in some respects to represent a liminal space on the fringes of society. Further correspondences can be seen in the fact that the two young men, both of whom are tied up, are described specifically as supine and naked; and while the former is bitten by ants, the latter severs his tongue with his teeth.²²

The most conspicuous and thought-provoking parallel, however, is that neither of the vignettes is concluded. The *Vida*, rather than pausing to offer the *coup de grâce*, ploughs frustratingly onwards to a discussion of Paul’s flight from martyrdom, depriving readers of the gore they had expected to see, and in so doing, implicitly urging them to reassess the demands of their literary and spiritual predilections. The text in this way adopts a narrative criterion (the extent to which the author is able to describe and report) as a way of counterpointing the relationship not simply between martyr and audience, but martyr and ascetic. The truncation, in this sense, is deliberate and highly effective, functioning as a means with which to establish a gradational relationship between the traditional act of martyrdom by blood, and asceticism, which as Virginia Burrus rightly maintains, should be seen not as “a compensatory substitute”, but an active choice on Paul’s part that “aggressively displaces” the by now socially irrelevant mode of sanctity espoused by the martyrs in the garden.²³

²⁰ *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia, 2004), 26.

²¹ Kelly, *Jerome*, 61. Ironically, Kelly’s point is less applicable to Jerome’s original than it is to Voragine’s subsequent Latin reworking, which, as we have seen, gives undue prominence to this episode, and in so doing, offers a more salacious and sensationalist account.

²² For Christianity, Rome, and cognate notions of representation and opposition, see Charles F. Altman, “Two Types of Opposition and the Structure of Latin Saints’ Lives,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* new series 6 (1975): 1–11, Alison Goddard Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hanover NH, 1987), and G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, The Wiles Lectures Given at the University of Belfast (Cambridge, 1995).

²³ Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 173n27, but see also Altman, “Two Types of Opposition” and

The result, by implication, is the establishment of an act of replacement that can be traced ultimately to an idea spelled out (but by no means fully resolved) in Athanasius's treatment of Antony, with the fleeting pain of the martyr's sacrifice pitted against a lifetime of daily martyrdom in the form of ascetic endurance. The corollary, of course, is the enhancement of an existing strand of parallelism, with the primacy of asceticism over martyrdom now effectively matching the hagiographic primacy of Paul over Antony, as well as the literary primacy of Jerome over Athanasius and Evagrius.

PAUL AND THE DESERT

Paul's decision to flee from (rather than seek out) martyrdom is presented not as a source of embarrassment or a measure of cowardice, but a triumph to be lauded. It can be linked to the fact that, unlike Antony, who famously spurned formal education, Paul is a cerebral and contemplative saint, "enseñado en las letras de Egipto e en las griegas" (55–56).²⁴ His cognitive ability leads him in this way not to throw away his life in what might subsequently be regarded as an instant of petulant resistance, but to take a longer view, using each moment as form of homage and reverence. His "hereditat larga asaz" (55), like that of Antony, is spurned along with his commitment to his sister, who is in this instance caught up in a web of greed spun by her husband that succeeds in producing an additional element of motivation in the decision to eschew worldly society.²⁵ His flight is in this sense catalyzed not simply by the legacy of the Decian and Valerian persecutions (of which Jerome's readers, and, we must also assume, Paul, have been offered representative examples in the form of the martyrs in the garden), but by greed, a theme to which Jerome will eventually return.²⁶

Yet the details of Paul's formative experiences are not offered to the reader. By the time that we learn something of the nature of his life in the desert, he is already outside the cave in which he is to spend the remainder of his mortal days. How he found it, arriving in so doing at a magical and mysterious location far from the fringes of civilization, is a question not considered worthy enough to merit even cursory authorial attention. The truncation forces readers to think of the unreported fate of the martyrs in

Leclercq, "Antoine et Paul," 260.

²⁴ The Castilian text offers a relatively literal translation: "litteris tam Graecis quam Aegyptiacis apprime eruditus" (20).

²⁵ Again, the *Vida* offers a relatively literal rendering: "post mortem amborum parentum in haereditate locupleti" (20).

²⁶ Paradoxically, the *Vida* twice states otherwise, initially by claiming that Paul "apartárase a una aldea a morar por la gran tenpestad de la persecución" (57) and then by affirming that this wisest of saints "fuése fuyendo a un yermo desierto fasta que oviese fin la persecución de aquel tiempo" (63–64). The Castilian text simplifies its original in the first instance and changes the emphasis from mountain to wasteland in the second: "Et cum persecutionis procella detonaret, in villam remotiorem et secretiorem secessit" (20) and "ad montium deserta confugiens, dum persecutionis finem praestolaretur" (21). The later *Flos sanctorum con sus ethimologías* is less charitable and attributes his motivation specifically to fear: "E aquesto fizo Sant Polo por miedo de los tormentos que veía fazer a los *christianos* por que fuyó aquel lugar yermo" (fol. 28^v).

the garden, but a series of more telling points of contact emerge as the saint rolls away the stone that marks the entrance and begins to peer inside. At this point Paul's curiosity guides readers to a locus that, as Virginia Burrus has noted, "expands upwards wondrously, as if to accommodate Paul's desire, opening to the sky, extending with the branches of a palm tree, encircling a neatly enclosed stream."²⁷

This second garden functions partly as a mirror, and partly as an inversion, of the first. As a *locus amoenus* evoked by greenery and running water, it will provide a place in which love (divine love, that is) will be allowed to develop and blossom free from the incongruous and unwelcome interference of traditional Roman savagery. Yet the garden, safely enclosed, and with the stout protection of solid rock on all sides, can also be read as a *hortus conclusus*, the traditionally bounded garden that not simply protects, but is representative of the virginity that Paul is eager to preserve and that was so viciously assaulted by the harlot in the garden.

The contrast, in this sense, could not be more telling: Paul, divinely consecrating the essence of his corporeal being to the demands of ascetic endeavour, will remain forever untouched in his sacred space; the martyr, in contrast, corporeally violated, is first subjected to a brutal and humiliating form of sexual coercion before then (we are compelled to assume) being murdered at the hands of his oppressors. Life in this way contrasts death, but Paul's sacred space could also potentially be read as a tomb in which his virginal flesh will eventually rot and die, wasted by the traditionally withering rigours of asceticism. It could also perhaps be read as a womb that will protect and nurture his embryonic foray into ascetic endeavour until he is reborn into heaven and everlasting bliss. The cave in this sense is a genuinely liminal space, standing (like the garden) both at the fringes of society and at a stage removed from the afterlife.

The *Vida's* polyvalent approach invites readers to reflect on the distinction between martyrdom and asceticism, for if asceticism can be understood as a process of daily martyrdom, and Paul's devotion as a form of slow dying, the cave becomes a private amphitheatre, a locus of suffering, reminiscent in part of the garden in which the martyrs are tortured, but also of the tomb in which Athanasius places Antony. A link between the three is established most tangibly by the eavesdropping gaze of the narrator, which renders public the otherwise secret miracle of suffering, and in so doing, preserves the legacy of sacrifice for the benefit of posterity.

Yet the text goes further: Paul's garden, the *hortus conclusus* that serves as a protective barrier to his virginity, will eventually be disturbed by an uninvited interloper who, by interrupting the saint's celestial calm, will enact a form of physical penetration against which he will feel initially compelled to struggle. The connotations of the encounter, as we shall see, are uniquely complex and shaped by aspects of symbolism that merit detailed attention. What is clear above all else, however, is that Jerome endorses Paul not merely with his own words, but those of his major eremitic rival, who serves in this respect to establish a palpable connection between Paul and his audience, rendering the unknowable knowable, and the private public. In this sense, we can

²⁷ *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 28. For a broader analysis of the relationship between Paul, his cave, and the desert, see Stephen J. Davis, "Jerome's *Life of Paul* and the Promotion of Egyptian Monasticism in the West," in *The Cave Church of Paul the Hermit at the Monastery of St Paul, Egypt* (New Haven, 2008), 25–41.

literally take his (rather than Jerome's) word for it.

Before Antony embarks on his journey, however, Jerome offers a final tantalizing detail. Above the cave, in a series of rooms, Paul finds a collection of rusty stamps and hammers that had been used, the narrator boldly announces, when Antony and Cleopatra were lovers, to mint secret coin. This detail appears at first sight to represent another awkward narrative digression, comparable in some respects to that of the martyrs in the garden. Yet the distinction between the former and present uses of the cave introduces a number of significant contrasts, with wealth and poverty on the one hand, and presence and absence on the other. More tellingly, however, Cleopatra's traditional reputation for lechery forces readers to think of unbridled lust, the harlot in the garden, and Antony's corresponding descent into lasciviousness. The opposition is in this sense at least threefold, with martyr and *meretrix*, Antony and Cleopatra, and Antony and Paul bound together and underpinned, as Virginia Burrus so aptly puts it, by "so many switchbacks, both connective and disruptive, along the tortuous track of this tale."²⁸

There are now, of course, two Antonys: and while the Roman Antony establishes an element of negative typology, tarnishing the cave by association, his Egyptian counterpart stands more awkwardly purely as a result of his name. The situation, however, is perhaps more complex than it at first appears, for as the identities of the two Antonys bleed into one another, Rome bleeds into Egypt, as past meets present and West meets East. The text in this way begins to unravel a little more of its inner meaning: two pasts, one remote and one more recent, both of which are predicated on the interaction between Rome and Egypt (or West and East), serve as comments not simply on identity, but the transference or distillation of identity into higher forms of being.

The harlot queen and the disgraced triumvir, for instance, serve as a model of the corrupting fusion (or, perhaps, hybridization) of Egypt and Rome, with their depravity symbolized by the existence of a clandestine mint producing coins in their image. This in turn leads to a different type of depravity, as the blood of a now Christian Egypt is spilled in the garden and the bloom of its virtue is destroyed by the intransigence of polytheistic Rome. It then leads eventually to Paul who, by enacting his own twofold distillation of identity, replaces martyrdom by asceticism, and one Antony by another, as he seeks in this way to mint an altogether different type of coin. This will be achieved by eating the fruit of the palm and dressing in its leaves – an internal and external transformation indicative of an act of symbolic incorporation on which Jerome, as always, will have the last word.

ANTONY AND THE DESERT

The question of incompleteness, the truncation of narrative and chronological time, becomes most apparent as Jerome finally turns to Antony who, at the tender age of ninety, learns in the context of a vision of the existence of a man who is "mejor que él e

²⁸ *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 28.

de mayor perfección" (90).²⁹ The man, of course, is Paul, who entered the desert at the age of sixteen, but who is now, some ninety-seven years later, presented as a venerable old man on the point of death. The fact that the text fashions such a substantial truncation can be read partly in relation to the fate of the martyrs in the garden, for just as an account of their deaths (the very essence of their being as sacrificial victims) is withheld, so too is a description of Paul's life in the desert. His trials and battles against temptation, diabolical or otherwise, are thus, in marked contrast to Athanasius's treatment of Antony, deemed unsuitable for inclusion. The desert in this sense becomes strangely beguiling, but deliberately so, for it is here (as the narrator fulfils his promise in the prologue to offer material from the beginning and end of Paul's life but not its central portion) that the audience begins to understand a good deal more of the way in which the foundation of monastic asceticism is presented in a glowingly positive light, with the severing of worldly bonds seen not as an act of sacrifice, but of fulfilment and divine communion.

The truncation, in this sense, can be taken as an indication of authorial repackaging and a manifestation of a latent ideological purpose, which succeeds, as Patricia Cox Miller rightly notes, in presenting the desert as "nothing if not paradissally hospitable."³⁰ It becomes impossible in this respect either to separate Paul from Jerome, who seem united in their reconstruction of the desert landscape as a place of achievement and self-realization, or Antony from the audience, as his desperate desire to find and emulate Paul effectively becomes a means with which to endorse and provide support for Christians with ascetic inclinations.

This, of course, is a process that functions in the Castilian text in terms of a strange act of ventriloquism, for as Jerome presents Paul as "a compelling statement of his own view of asceticism as the highest form of Christian life", he does so purely in terms of the way in which he would have understood it at the time: as an unstructured and self-determined foray into the desert in the expectation of self-fulfilment.³¹ The Castilian text, in contrast, reworked a thousand years later, should most appropriately be understood in the context of late medieval monasticism, where separation from the world would have been experienced not as desert solitude, but in the protective bosom of the cloister. It is perhaps for this reason that, as is the case with the legend of Mary of Egypt, the architects of Compilation A rejected Voragine's versions (which are too truncated to offer anything other than a cursory impression of the origin of monastic endeavour) and replaced them with texts deemed more suitable for consumption by its target audience.

Antony is assisted in his journey by three unusual guides: a centaur, a satyr, and a she-wolf. The animals, understandably, have aroused a good deal of scholarly interest, and while pioneering critics such as E. Coleiro appraised their significance in terms of the intrusion of the fanciful, more imaginative readings have been advanced by Patricia

²⁹ The Castilian text interpolates additional emphasis: "At illi per noctem quiescenti revelatum est esse alium interius multo se meliorem ad quem visendum deberet proficisci" (22).

³⁰ "Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 209–33 at 215.

³¹ Miller, "Jerome's Centaur", 215.

Cox Miller, and more recently, Virginia Burrus, who expands her work.³² Miller's thesis is that the centaur (and to a lesser extent, the satyr, which embodies a comparable degree of hybridity) can be read as a hyper-icon that comments not simply on the role of the desert in Christian anthropology, but Jerome's fundamentally ambivalent attitude towards the desert in his work as a whole. As an entity, the centaur simultaneously encapsulates positive and negative extremes, and in so doing, reflects not simply on the desert, which is presented as part of a peculiarly ambivalent landscape of ascetic identity, but the hopes and fears of the monk, as he confronts the inner wildness that is commonly regarded as the source of his strength, but also his weakness.³³ This argument is accepted and endorsed by Virginia Burrus, who complements it by offering a series of incisive observations on Jerome's uniquely quirky literary style.³⁴

The shaping of the Castilian reworking makes it possible to take the argument further. Antony, struggling to cope with corporeal frailty, rests his "mienbros flacos" (92), a phrase that recalls the "mienbros varoniles" (45–46) that were so brutally assaulted by the prostitute in the garden, on a suspiciously phallic staff that serves to prop up his ailing masculinity.³⁵ Faced, like both martyrs, by the wilting heat of the sun, he pleads for divine intercession and immediately encounters a centaur, a hybrid amalgam of man and horse.

As Miller shows, the centaur is traditionally noted for its hyper-masculine and violent sexuality (which was believed to antedate a time of sexual difference), along with its hostility to the foundational norms of culture, "particularly institutions of guest-friendship and hospitality and the institution of marriage."³⁶ The centaur in this respect is a liminal creature that lives on the fringes of society where, paradoxically, it is able to provide civilized society with a means with which to recognize itself as civilized. Part antithesis, but also part mirror-image, its ontological hybridity sheds light not simply on Antony, who crosses himself in fear, but the paradoxical nature of the desert.

Traditionally, centaurs were thought to have the gift of prophecy, but this one does not: Antony, speaking with calm authority, articulates his desire to find Paul; the centaur, "as mute as the tongueless martyr" in the garden grunts with gritted teeth and merely gesticulates by showing the way with its arm.³⁷ This, to some extent, recalls the narrator's comments on the limitations of his ability to narrate or describe, but as he playfully notes: "Non sabemos enpero sy le demostró el diablo aquella visión por lo espantar o si suele aquel yermo engendrar las tales animalias" (101–02).

The second hybrid, the satyr, serves as an inexact reproduction of the first. Found predictably in a valley, the most female of geographical loci, the satyr has

³² See Coleiro, "St Jerome's Lives of the Hermits", Miller, "Jerome's Centaur", and Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 25–33.

³³ "Jerome's Centaur", 226.

³⁴ *The Sex Lives of Saints*, but see also Kelly, *Jerome*, 40 and 60–61.

³⁵ As one might expect, the parallel is unique to the *Vida*. The Latin has "manibus attrahere virilia" (20) and "venerabilis senex infirmos artus baculo regente sustentans" (22).

³⁶ "Jerome's Centaur", 217.

³⁷ Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 29.

traditionally been regarded as a rapacious woodland creature, with the pointed ears, legs, and horns of a goat and the body of a man. Its reputation for lust and unrestrained revelry relates it to the centaur, but as we by now expect, this second animal-human cross-breed is not all that it seems. Antony, who reacts as if he were a *miles Christi* by girding the shield of faith and the breastplate of hope (“tomó el escudo de la fee e la cota de la esperança”, 106–07), prepares himself for a diametrical confrontation that in some respects evokes the fate of the martyrs in the garden.³⁸ The animal, however, speaks courteously about its faith in Christ, and with its instinct and appetites somehow held in check (or perhaps sublimated into religious desire and reverence by the magical and mysterious power of the desert), it extends its arm and offers him some of the dates that it is carrying.

Its behaviour in this respect establishes a series of tantalizing relationships, for while the dates relate the satyr directly to Paul, its other characteristics succeed in formulating oppositions, with speech now pitted against silence, human against animal, and chastity against fornication. Antony, overawed by its paradoxical nature, wounds the desert with his staff (an action pregnant with symbolism) and gives voice to a passionate outburst in which he commends wild beasts for speaking of Christ while deploring the descent of Alexandria into idolatry: “¡Guay de ti, Alexandría, que dexas de adorar a Dios e adoras las animalias espantosas! ¡Guay de ti, cibdat fornicaria! Ca, ¿qué dirás quando las bestias adoran e conoscién a Jhesu Christo e tú non lo conoscién nin lo adoras?” (118–20).³⁹

The outburst draws a series of narrative threads together. The text so far has been predicated on binary oppositions. The two martyrs in the garden mirror one another, but as a collective representation of diametrical opposition, they function as a unit, pitting the virtue of Christian Egypt against the depravity of pagan Rome. Paul, who replaces Antony, is presented not simply as the fulfilment of Elias and John the Baptist, who function as twin typological precursors, but a figure whose virtues are lauded by a different binary pairing, Macarius and Amathas. By opting for asceticism rather than martyrdom, Paul flees from city to desert, and while he is there he lives in a liminal cave-garden reminiscent of the garden in which the martyrs were tortured. The cave itself once served as a clandestine mint for the lovers, Antony and Cleopatra, and while the two Antonys reflect on one another, Cleopatra’s traditional reputation for harlotry provides a further reminiscence of the episode in the garden. The two hybrids, centaur and satyr, build on this pattern by establishing contrasts between human and animal as well as speech and silence. They also, however, function as a pairing, and while their aggressive and predatory masculinity stands in opposition the fate of the martyrs in the garden (not to mention the corporeal frailty of Antony and Paul), the specific formulation of Antony’s remarks plays on the twofold distinction between city

³⁸ The Castilian text medievalizes its original with the introduction of the mail coat: “scutum fidei et loricam spei” (23).

³⁹ The Castilian text omits the clause referring to demons and makes a number of subtle adjustments in styling and emphasis: “Vae tibi, Alexandria, quae pro Deo portenta veneraris. Vae tibi, civitas meretrix, in quam totius orbis daemones confluxere. Quid nunc dictura es? Bestiae Christum loquuntur, et tu pro Deo portenta veneraris” (24).

and idolatry on the one hand, and desert and faith on the other.

The strength of the binary pattern, however, is shattered by the appearance of a third animal. The she-wolf, which is presented structurally as the third (and in this respect most important) of Antony's guides, solemnizes the climax of his journey by leading him to Paul. It also, as we shall see, provides a bridge between the two main portions of the legend, for overall, it functions as the third (and thus, most pivotal) in a sequence of five animal engagements.

Conceptually, the she-wolf is the most elusive of the three. As the only non-male guide, it establishes a binary distinction between male and female, but while centaur and satyr are traditionally characterized by hyper-masculine sexuality, the semantic and lexical relationship between *lupa* ("she-wolf") and *lupanar* ("brothel") relates the she-wolf to prostitution, and thus, both Cleopatra and the harlot in the garden. It may in fact be possible to take the argument further, for by penetrating the sacred space of Paul's desert dwelling, the she-wolf effectively becomes the harlot in *his* garden. A further correspondence can be traced to pagan tradition, where she-wolves are classified as liminal creatures that serve as chthonic guides or escorts to the dead. The fact that the she-wolf lures Antony to Paul's cave (a location already characterized in some ways as a tomb) can in this sense be read as an inevitable product of syncretism.

The most startling relationship, however, is with Rome and the foundation of its fierce martial identity in the form of the myth of Romulus and Remus, who were reputed to have suckled at a she-wolf's breast. In a text that plays so clearly on oppositions between Egypt and Rome, with Antony and Cleopatra on the one hand and Egyptian martyrs murdered by Roman authorities on the other, it becomes difficult to avoid the possibility that the she-wolf was designed to be understood (at least in part) as a representative of the culture that it founded.

In leading Antony to Paul, the she-wolf succeeds in bringing Rome to Egypt, or perhaps, in terms of the framework of replacement established so diligently by the narrator in his prologue, in bringing Roman validation to the fledgling expansion of Egyptian monasticism. It is this very interaction (or, indeed, fusion) between cultures that explains various other aspects of the text's intellectual fabric, notably its interest in hybridity, with the centaur and the satyr in particular revealing the terrible dangers, as well the peculiarly beguiling attraction, of an unbalanced or unwarranted synthesis of incompatible identities. This, almost inevitably, leads chronologically backwards (as if somehow echoing the typological relationship between Paul and his biblical precursors), to the hybrid admixture of Egyptian and Roman with the martyrs in the garden, where coitus becomes a weapon of spiritual coercion, and then to Antony and Cleopatra, whose sexual depravity is the stuff of legend.

ANTONY AND PAUL

The explosive cocktail of associations established by the three animal guides paves the way for the climatic meeting between Antony and Paul. The desert so far has served as a common denominator, functioning as a place of cathartic purgation by absorbing worldly desires and sublimating them into spiritual reverence. The process continues as Antony, tiptoeing his way into the darkness of the cave, blunders by hitting

a rock and hears Paul scampering away and bolting a door behind him. Devastated, Antony throws himself to the ground and, in an impassioned outburst, craves admittance. He adds, with a turn-of-phrase echoing the rhetoric of courtly love, that he will die unless he is allowed to see Paul's face:⁴⁰

Tú sabes quién só yo e de dónde vengo e por qué. Sé que non meresco ver la tu cara, mas enpero non me partiré de aquí fasta que la vea. Tú, que rescibes las bestias, ¿por qué desechas al onbre? Busquéte e falléte e llamo por que me abras. E si non lo meresciere alcançar de ty, aquí moriré delante de aquesta tu puerta; e sy ál non, enterrarás la mi carne desque fuere muerta. (142–46)

Having played hard to get, Paul soon relents, but not before he has undermined Antony's hyperbolic affectation by taking the death-as-infatuated-frustration metaphor and concretizing it in the form of a literal reference to the loss of life. He then embraces the new arrival before fixing his admiringly voyeuristic gaze on the devastation of his corporeal body: "¡Cata aquí aquél que buscaste con tan grant trabajo! ¡Cata aquí los mienbros podridos con vejez e cobiertos de mucha canez! ¡Cata aquí el onbre que se tornará en polvo muy en breve!" (152–54).⁴¹

The tensions embedded in the encounter between Antony and Paul have been read by Virginia Burrus in terms the establishment of an "almost parodically groping rite of courtship" while Pierre Leclercq goes further, affirming that Antony plays Romeo to Paul's Juliet.⁴² The episode, underpinned as it is by the symbolic connotations of the door, which could be understood anatomically, plays simultaneously not simply on the *hortus conclusus* tradition, with its suggestion of the violation of virginal space, but on that of *amor de lonh*, where lovers become enamoured of one another purely on the basis of reputation and thereafter meet in order to fulfil their desire.

The monastic orientation of the text, however, suggests that we should read it not as an exploration of homosexual love or symbolic sodomy, but in terms of the sublimation of Antony's desire to seek out the man who, as we have already been told, is "mejor que él e de mayor perfección" (90). His affection for Paul can thus be understood in mystical or devotional terms, with the central image of the door recalling not simply the words of Christ in Matthew 7:7–8 and Luke 11:9–10, but most pertinently, the Song of Songs 5:2, which focuses specifically on the notion of mystical marriage.

In this respect, the bond between master and novice can be read not simply in

⁴⁰ The Castilian text follows the Latin closely: "Qui sim, unde, cur venerim, nosti. Scio me non mereri conspectum tuum: tamen nisi videro, non recedam. Qui bestias recipis, hominem cur repellis? Quaesivi, et inveni: pulso ut aperiatur. Quod si non impetro, hic moriar ante postes tuos: certe sepelies vel cadaver" (25).

⁴¹ The threefold repetition of the imperative, which is unique to the Castilian text, imbues it with striking rhetorical intensity: "En quem tanto labore quaesisti, putridis senectute membris operit inculta canities. En vides hominem, pulverem mox futurum" (25).

⁴² Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 31; Leclercq, "Antoine et Paul", 263.

relation to the question of hybridity, which has previously produced either savagery or monstrous cross-breeds, but the mystical union of Christ and the Church. It is perhaps for this reason that Paul focuses Antony's gaze on his liminally hybrid corporeal nature, showing how, like the crucified Christ, he is both man and corpse or flesh and dust.

A more pertinent and timely symbol of the assimilation of mystical identity, however, is provided by a fourth animal reference, as the encounter between the two men is abruptly punctuated by the appearance of a crow, which brings Paul not half a loaf, but one that is strikingly complete. The bread, of course, is a symbol of Eucharistic incorporation, while in yet another borrowing from traditional lore, the monogamy of the crow symbolizes the mystical union of Christ and the Church. The two men, bound in this way by the common flesh of Christ, sit conspicuously "a la orilla de la fuente" (164), their own mystical *locus amoenus*, and piously contend as to who should break the bread.⁴³ The ensuing joint effort stresses equality and indivisibility, which is solemnized as they subsequently imbibe water, the very symbol of baptismal purity.

Yet Paul and Antony must part, and having spent the night in pious vigil, the delicious joy of nocturnal fulfilment turns to sadness, as Jerome, with a borrowing from the *aubade* tradition, has Antony depart at dawn. Paul, as he admits, is dying, and so in order to be ready, he asks Antony to return to his monastery to collect the shroud given to him by Athanasius. As Carolinne White affirms, this "is apparently the same cloak which Antony is said to have bequeathed back to Athanasius when he died some fifteen years later", and in this respect it serves as a "witty means of insisting on Paul's priority over Antony."⁴⁴

The precise formulation of the request, however, suggests that the interpretation could be taken further, for by constituting himself as the central element of corporeal holiness around which the Athanasian mantle is preserved for posterity, Paul presents himself as the kernel of ascetic spirituality, and Athanasius, its mere shell or outer layer. The corollary, of course, can be appreciated most tangibly at the level of authorship, for despite establishing a series of telling oppositions (notably body versus soul, terrestrial versus celestial, and life versus death), Jerome succeeds above all else in constructing Paul not simply as a means with which to replace Antony, but as a way of combining him with Athanasius, who will now, by means of synecdoche, find himself buried for all time in the dust of the Egyptian desert.

The amalgamation of Paul and Athanasius also plays on the question of hybridity. Jerome, as we have seen, counterpoints previous interactions between Egypt and Rome not simply by providing references to their ill-fated union, but by peppering the desert with monstrous cross-breeds. By fusing Paul and Athanasius, of course, the process is taken a stage further, and just as the she-wolf brings Roman validation to Egyptian monastic culture, Paul's decaying flesh ennobles not just the shroud in which it is wrapped but the ground in which it is buried. This interpretation accords extremely well with Paul's words elsewhere, notably his outburst on the fickleness of Alexandria, the city with which Athanasius is most closely associated, and that can, by implication, be regarded as a microcosm of Egypt itself. It also harmonizes with the impression of

⁴³ The Castilian text simplifies its original: "super vitrei marginem fontis uterque consedit" (26).

⁴⁴ *Early Christian Lives*, 221n3.

Jerome sketched by J. N. D. Kelly who, in his penetrating study of his life and polemical legacy, characterizes him as “self-willed and sharp-tongued, irascible to the point of morbidity, inordinately proud of his Roman links and contemptuous of his uncultivated, ill-mannered [...] neighbours.”⁴⁵

The significance of the union between Egypt and Rome may, of course, have been understood in this way by the monks to whom the medieval Castilian version would have been directed, but more likely is that they would have appreciated the Romanization of the Egyptian landscape as a more general measure of loyalty to Rome, and thus, mother Ecclesia. We cannot, as Thompson and Walsh rightly note, be entirely certain either of the dating of the original Compilation or of the various phases of copying that took place thereafter.⁴⁶ The decision to assemble such a vast and detailed corpus, however, was clearly not one that was undertaken either in isolation from its contemporary context or without a specific purpose in mind.

It becomes tempting in this light to search for comparable relationships between literature and society, and it may be that the formation and subsequent development of the Compilation should be understood in relation to some of the major events of the fourteenth century, notably the Hundred Years’ War, which erupted in the late 1330s, and the Trastamaran Conflict, which followed some thirty years later. Equally plausible as influences are the Black Death (1348–50) and the Western Schism (1378–1418), which produced a cataclysmic upheaval in the role of the Church in society and led, as a matter of consequence, to an upsurge in the need for materials offering spiritual inspiration and reassurance.

A more pertinent line of enquiry, however, can be established in relation to the question of heresy, as it is here that the Castilian reworking offers readers a further instance of literary ventriloquism. Jerome, writing during the aftermath of the Nicene Synod in 325, which sought to achieve irenic clarification with regard to the nature of the Godhead, espouses a fundamentally Roman (or Western) view of the Trinity, characterizing the Son as one substance with the Father. His contempt for the Eastern, tritheistic understanding, which stresses personal distinctions, would have been informed by the fact that while living in Trier, he transcribed a copy of *On the Synods* by Hilary of Poitiers, a text that would have given him a unique insight into problems of definition and their legacy in the nascent Christian Church. His most assertive comment, however, can be read in his letters, where he discusses the “poison of the Arian dogma” and the subsequent cleansing of heresy.⁴⁷ This, of course, is a polemic that reflects clearly on his treatment of Saint Paul, for in addition to the exploration of questions of union, fusion, and hybridity, the text also focuses specifically on problems of identity and orthodoxy, with the symbolic representation of Roman (or Western) validation imposed on the values and development of Egyptian (or Eastern) asceticism. It becomes tempting, in view of this, to read the text as a manifestation of a latent ideological purpose, with the centripetal effect of Roman authority drawing the East (willingly or not) away from heresy and monstrous hybridity towards a nucleus of

⁴⁵ Jerome, 55.

⁴⁶ “Old Spanish Manuscripts”, 18–19.

⁴⁷ Kelly, Jerome, 32.

pristine Roman orthodoxy.

The Castilian text, positioned geographically at the opposite end of the Mediterranean, is equally drawn towards Rome and its Church, and it may be that in the pointed identification of the Saracen hordes who eventually sacked Antony's monastery as "moros" (193) – "Saracenis" (26) in Jerome's original – it presents the struggle in Egypt as a prototype of its own national problems.

It is doubtful, however, that the decision to reject Voragine and opt for Jerome can be attributed purely to questions of typology, and with its pugnacious endorsement of apostolic poverty, the text should, perhaps, be read in relation to a characteristically medieval neurosis: the relationship between wealth, ownership, and the imitation of Christ. This controversy, which is associated most specifically with the Friars Minor, is one that erupted in the twelfth century, and that by the early portion of the thirteenth (in the years immediately preceding the production of Compilation A), produced a series of papal bulls followed by accusations of heresy, a wave of excommunications, and ultimately, the burning of members of heretical offshoots, many of whom took Francis's teachings to extremes, either by refusing to accept material possession altogether or by forcibly and violently disabusing clerics of the wealth of the Church.⁴⁸

It becomes tempting in this respect to regard the replacement of Voragine by Jerome in Compilation A as a further manifestation of the perceived sophistication of its audience. In a monastic setting, with a congregation able to engage with the finite nuances of Jerome's original, his text would not have been misinterpreted as a simplistic attack on wealth, particularly (as we shall see) that of the Church, or indeed, as an invitation to a life of militant apostolic poverty lived in isolation from orthodox ecclesiastical control. In fact, it would no doubt have been received, as the author of the Castilian reworking probably intended, as a defence of the merits of ascetic renunciation *per se* and the value of Christian brotherhood. This perhaps explains the parallel inclusion within the Compilation of the version of the legend of Mary of Egypt composed by Paul the Deacon, which espouses an ethos that is fundamentally similar, although by no means couched in such aggressively truculent terms.

It also becomes tempting to think about the parallel formation and development of a second medieval Castilian reworking of Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, Compilation B, or the *Estoria de los santos*. This version, which could potentially have produced at around the same time, or slightly earlier, than its more accomplished counterpart, continues the process of abbreviation begun by Voragine, by offering a series of accounts that can be classified in some respects as bullet points in the form of a narrative from which preachers would subsequently be able to reconstruct edifying lessons, potentially in the form of sermons.⁴⁹ These, in all likelihood, would have been used predominantly by mendicant orders such as the Franciscans, and it by no means

⁴⁸ For questions of heresy in the Franciscan order, see John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to 1517* (Oxford, 1968), Bernard McGinn, ed. *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1998), and Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2006).

⁴⁹ For Compilation B, see Thompson and Walsh, "Old Spanish Manuscripts", Hernández Amez, *Descripción y filiación de los "Flores Sanctorum"*, 167–279, and Beresford, *The Severed Breast*, 59–112.

coincidental in this respect that one of its most remarkable features is that it omits all but one of the *Legenda's* desert ascetics, pruning away or failing to transmit the legends not just of Paul, but of Macarius, Pastor, John, Moses, Arsenius, and Agathon. Antony, in contrast, is preserved, albeit in vastly abbreviated form, while curiously, a disproportionately extensive treatment of one of Jerome's other desert saints, Hilarion, is appended to one of the later and less reliable manuscript recensions.⁵⁰ Reasons for their absence, of course, are open to interpretation, but it may be that the legacy of the desert was considered too dangerous or incendiary a notion (or perhaps even too redolent of heresy) to be considered suitable as a prompt for preaching for use in relation to the unlettered masses, where its emphasis might easily have been misconstrued.

THE DESERT AND ITS LEGACY

Antony's second journey is more agonizing than the first. Torn between love of Paul and respect for his authority, he returns to the monastery, where he explains what has happened to his fellows and collects Athanasius's mantle. Jerome insists at various points on the question of corporeal frailty, presenting the journey as a cumbersome trek undertaken by one who, like Paul, is rapidly becoming a liminal figure, wasted by asceticism, and while not yet a corpse, no longer fully a man.

As a narrative device, Antony serves as a link between desert and monastery, and it is through him that Paul's solitary and otherwise unknowable experience is preserved first by the monks to whom he reports, and then ultimately, by the narrator and his readers. A further impression of transference, particularly of power and authority, is suggested by the way in which Antony lauds Paul's achievements, characterizing him (as did Jerome in the prologue) as the typological fulfilment of Elias and John the Baptist: "¡Guay de mí, pecador, que lievo sobre mí falso nonbre de monje! Ca yo vi a Elías e a Sant Johán en el desierto, mas vi a Paulo *en* paraíso" (199–200).⁵¹

This second pairing, taken in conjunction with the brace of monks to whom Antony speaks, recalls the binary essence on which much of the text is predicated. Yet its emphasis in other respects is ternary: the return journey takes three days, but a mere three hours before its completion (as Antony, incidentally, completes the third and climactic journey between desert and monastery), he looks high into the sky and sees Paul's soul ascending to heaven in the company of a trinity of angels, prophets, and apostles. It becomes tempting, in view of Jerome's engagement with heresy elsewhere, to read the evolution from binary to ternary as a comment on the Arian controversy and an affirmation of the validity not of an imperfect (or, indeed, as we have seen, occasionally monstrous or hybrid) binary pairing, but a harmonious and mystical fusion

⁵⁰ For the Compilation B versions of Antony's legend, see Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo 9 fols 10^r–11^r, Fundación Lázaro Galdiano 419 fols 17^{ra}–18^{ra}, Escorial K-II-12 fols 36^{vb}–37^{vb}, and Escorial h-I-14 fols 42^{rb}–43^{va}, and for Hilarion, Escorial h-I-14 fols 314^{rb}–22^{vb}.

⁵¹ The Castilian text follows the Latin closely: "Vae mihi peccatori, qui falsum monachi nomen fero. Vidi Eliam, vidi Joannem in deserto, et vere vidi Paulum in paradiso" (27).

expressed as a trinity. The very manner of Paul's death, frozen as he is in an upright position of prayer with arms outstretched towards heaven, emphasizes the progression from binary to ternary, for with this third death, which recalls the partially reported fate of the martyrs in the garden (who are supine but equally static), Jerome effectively brings his text to a close: "e vido el cuerpo del bienaventurado Sant Paulo estar de rodillas, e alçada la cabeça, e estendidas las manos al cielo. E veyéndolo asý estar, pensó que aún bivía e orava, e esperó un poco de espacio. E desque non lo oyó sospirar segunt que solía, entendió que era muerto" (215–18).⁵²

Paul in this sense becomes something of an enigma: as an ascetic rather than a martyr, he stands as representative of a form of sanctity that appears in many ways to have displaced a mode of Christian service that is characterized by implication as obsolete. Yet by offering the third and climactic death in a tripartite sequence, he stands as much as a continuation or fulfilment of the martyrs in the garden as he does in contradistinction to them. The relationship between martyrdom and asceticism should perhaps in this respect be thought of not in terms of a strict antithesis, but as parallel processes enacted on Christians in order to make them effectively of one flesh.

Paul's burial brings this process into sharper focus. Antony, weakened by ascetic rigour, finds himself incapable of digging a grave, but is soon assisted by a brace of lions, which appears immediately in answer to his prayers. The lions, which by traditional association symbolize the resurrection of the flesh, become subject, as is the case with various other animals, to a process of transformation (or, perhaps, hybridization) as they approach Antony not with characteristic savagery, but as if they were "palomas mansas" (230–31; cf. "columbas", 28). The desert, with its ability not just to hold instinct in check, but to modify, develop, or even sublimate identity, has triumphed once again. The lions assimilate the characteristics of the dove, and in so doing, the notion of resurrection is fused with the conventional identification of the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Yet perhaps most important is number symbolism: standing alone at a grave he was unable to dig, Antony looked a sad and pitiable figure, but now, accompanied by animal assistants, a trinity of mourners brings dignified closure to the life of an exemplary Christian. Their tears and lamentation, which render them one in spirit, provide an effective link into the climactic discussion of Paul's garment, which Antony takes, and on days of special religious significance, wears in memory of his now departed friend. In so doing, the "piadoso heredero" (245; cf. "pius haeres", 28) becomes one in flesh with Paul, just as Paul was bound as one in flesh with Athanasius.

The irony, of course, is obvious: Paul's legend takes Antony's as its starting point and attempts to replace Antony by Paul, affirming that the latter is the first of the great desert hermits, and the former a mere imitator of an existing mode of behaviour. The concluding portion of the *Vida*, however, binds the two so tightly that, rather than replace Antony, Paul's legacy becomes intertwined with that of his illustrious disciple. A deeper irony can be seen at the level of authorship and authorial focus, for by

⁵² The *Vida* is divergent in tone and emphasis: "vidit genubus complicatis, erecta cervice, extensisque in altum manibus, corpus exanime. Ac primum et ipse vivere eum credens, pariter orabat. Postquam vero nulla, ut solebat, suspiria precantis audivit, in flebile osculum ruens, intellexit quod etiam cadaver sancti Deum, cui omnia vivunt, officio gestus precaretur" (27).

presenting the relationship between the two saints in such a deeply idiosyncratic manner, Jerome succeeds not in offering a record of Paul, whose most significant achievements belong to the unrecorded central portion of his life, but of Antony's relationship to Paul. The text in this sense is a genuine paradox, for despite seeking to sketch a portrait of Paul, it becomes a profitable source of information on an episode in the life of Antony that is not preserved elsewhere.

Ironies aside, however, Jerome still has the final word, and it is in the loftily pugnacious nature of his tone that one begins to appreciate the specific resonance of the *Compilation A* recension. Jerome repackages Paul (and, by implication, Antony) to present him purely in terms of abject material poverty. He stands in this sense as the antithesis of those who dwell in rich and luxurious dwellings surrounded by tangible symbols of worldly affluence such as gold and silver. With exquisite but deceptively simple rhetorical flourish, Jerome pointedly asks: “¿qué fallesció a este bienaventurado viejo que estava medio desnudo en la cueva de aquel yermo?” (251–52).⁵³ The answer is glossed by a dual antithesis spelled out with absolute clarity: those who drink from gold and silver goblets studded with jewels contrast Paul, who drank water with cupped hands, while those who sport sumptuous garments should remember his nakedness. These initial contrasts produce an effortlessly syllogistic corollary, which relates those who imitate Paul to the everlasting joy of heaven, and those who do not to the flames of hell.

The most thought-provoking contrast, however, follows immediately afterwards, as Jerome, playing on the key theme of assimilated identity, argues that while Paul was clothed in Christ, those who are bedecked in silken robes have forsaken the mantle they had been given: “Aqueste pobrezillo guardó en sí desnudo la vestidura de Jhesu Christo, e vós, estando vestidos de seda, perdistés la vestidura que Jhesu Christo vos diera” (258–60).⁵⁴ This image, which brings closure to a series of notions embedded into the final portion of the narrative, reminds the audience of the extent to which Antony, Athanasius, and Paul are bound in a mystical tripartite union that in some respects echoes the indivisibility and perfection of the Godhead. It also paves the way for the development of a cognate contrast fashioned between Paul, who was buried in an unmarked grave, and the extravagant pomp and circumstance of those who opt for grandiose tombs and sepulchres in the hope of marking their legacy with tangible worldly reminders. With mordant sarcasm, Jerome asks: “E por ventura, ¿non saben podrescer los cuerpos de los ricos sinon en seda e en paños muy presciados?” (255–56).⁵⁵

The answer, which is expressed in the desire to inherit Paul's mantle, can be read autobiographically as a reflection of a frustrated attempt to withdraw to the silence and reverence of desert solitude. The monks to whom the subsequent Castilian version was addressed may not fully have understood this, although they would no doubt have

⁵³ The Castilian is embellished for rhetorical emphasis: “huic seni nudo quid unquam defuit?” (28–29).

⁵⁴ “Pobrezillo” replaces the less concrete “Ille” but the Castilian is otherwise close to the Latin: “Ille vestem Christi, nudus licet, tamen servavit; vos vestiti sericis, indumentum Christi perdidistis” (29).

⁵⁵ Characteristically, the Castilian text amplifies with the interpolation of a deliberate semi-tautology: “An cadavera divitum nisi in serico putrescere nesciunt?” (30).

appreciated and relished the confrontationally moralizing tone which, by specifically condemning affluent possession along with the vanity of human endeavour, can be read in relation to the seemingly vast and largely uncharted labyrinth of medieval compositions centred broadly on the *de contempu mundi* theme. The specificity of its wording, however, shows that they must, at the same time, have been considered educated and discerning enough to appreciate the text from a strictly orthodox perspective, reading attacks on sumptuous palaces, golden chalices, and silken vestments (strikingly, purple vestments) not in terms of the wealth and power of the Church, but of secular society. It is this point that shows why Compilation A is so different from other vernacular sanctorals, and why Voragine's text, which is pared down almost to the point of banality, was rejected in favour of Jerome's magnificently provocative insight into the essence of ascetic renunciation.

APPENDIX: THE *VIDA DE SAN PAULO*

The critical edition given as an appendix is based on Escorial h-III-22 fols 95^{vb}–102^{vb} (=A), listing semantically significant (as opposed to purely orthographic) variants from the other extant medieval copy, Biblioteca Nacional 12688 fols 190^{ra}–97^{rb} (=B). The texts were produced in the mid fifteenth century (most likely, 1440–70) and are copies of a common ancestor, now lost. Although neither is without error, the Escorial version is most suitable for selection as a base text, and on the relatively limited number of occasions when the Biblioteca Nacional version offers readings that are more grammatically or semantically plausible, or when there is an obvious lacuna, they have been incorporated into the edition and registered in the critical apparatus. For ease of reference, scribal abbreviations have been expanded and are indicated in the edition by the use of italics. The random distribution of *i/j* and *u/v* has been regularized, while word-initial *ff*–, *rr*–, and *ss*– are transcribed as *f*–, *r*–, and *s*–; *ç* is retained before *a*, *o*, and *u*, but is otherwise transcribed as *c*. Accentuation, punctuation, and word division follow modern practice with the exception of medieval compounds such as “deste”, which are left as they appear in the manuscripts.

[fol. 95^{vb}] De la vida de Sant Paulo, el primero hermitaño, *que* escribió el bienaventurado Sant Jerónimo

- [I] Muchos dubdan *quál* es el primero *que* comenzó a morar en el yermo. E algunos [fol. 96^{ra}] dizen que el profeta Elías e otros dizen que Sant Johán Bautista, mas a nós paresce que Helías fue más que monje e *que* Sant Johán comenzó antes que nasciese a profetar. E algunos, siguiendo la opinión del pueblo, dizen que Sant Antonio fue el primero que se apartó a morar en el yermo, e en parte dizen verdat, comoquier que non se apartó él tanto antes que todos al yermo, quanto encendió al estudio de los que después se apartaron al yermo por su enxienplo. Amatas, enpero, e Sant Macario, discípulos de Sant Antonio, dizen e afirman aún agora que Paulo, un tebeo, fue comienzo de aqueste nonbre e de aquesta orden. E aquesta opinión plaze a nós. E aqueste Amatas, de que agora fezimos mención, enterró el cuerpo de Sant Antonio, [fol. 96^{rb}] su maestro. E son algunos que, siguiendo su voluntad, dizen que fue comienzo otro onbre que moró *en* una cueva so tierra e era cobierto de cabello fasta el calcañar; e aún dizen otras muchas cosas que son *non* creybles e occiosas de contar. E porque la mentira de aquestos es muy atrevida e sin vergüeña, *non* ha menester de ser condepnada porque ella mesma se condepna. E porque la vida de Sant Antonio es ya escripta con asaz diligencia para memoria de los avenideros asý en latín como en griego, pensé de escrevir algunas pocas cosas del comienzo e de la fin de Paulo el tebeo, non confiando de mi yngenio, mas por que non fuese ascondida la su vida a los avenideros. Non es enpero sabido de onbre bivo en *qué* manera bivió en la hedat de medio o *qué* tentaciones [fol. 96^{va}] sufrió del enemigo antyguo e artero.

De la vida de Sant Paulo, primero hermitaño, que escribió el bienaventurado Sant Jerónimo

- [II] En tienpo de Decio e de Valeriano, perseguidores del nonbre *christiano* (quando Sant Cornelio papa fue en Roma martiriado, e Sant Cebrián en Cartagena, la de África), fueron destroydas en Egipto e en Tebayda muchas eglesias, e fueron martiridados por el nonbre del Salvador muchos *christianos*. E el enemigo engañoso e antiguo, buscando tormentos luengos para matar a los seguidores de la *christiandat*, trabajávase más por degollar las almas que por dar fin a la vida corporal. E segunt dize ese mesmo Sant Cebrián, que entonce fue martiriado, non era dado logar de morir a los que deseavan morir. E por que sea más conos|cida [fol. 96^{vb}] la crueldat de aquesta persecución e tenpestad, escreviré aquí dos cosas *para* enxienplo e memoria.
- [III] Como un santo mártir perseverase en la fee e fuese vencedor entre los tormentos que le mandava dar el juez, mandólo el juez enmelar e poner al fervor del sol, la cara al cielo, atadas las manos atrás, por que fuese vencido de las mordeduras de las moscas el que *non* pudiera ser vencido por las sartenes ardiendo e por otras cosas penosas. E otro mancebo que aún floreció en la hedat de la mancebía fue levado a un huerto muy delectable, e fue puesto en una cama mucho mollida e blanda entre la blancura de los lilios e la bermejura de las rosas, a la orilla de un río que corría con muy suave sonido e adó avía muchos árboles e fería muy manso ayre que mo|vía [fol. 97^{ra}] las fojas de los

árboles; e fue atado de pies e de manos con vergas verdes e floridas e blandas. E como se partiesen de allí los que lo ataran, vino a él una muger pública muy fermosa e
45 començólo a abraçar muy dulcemente e a lo tractar con las manos los mienbros
varoniles turpemente por que, despertados los mienbros al deseo de la delectación
carnal, se echase sobre él aquella muger, obradora de maldat. E veyéndose atado el
cavallero de Jhesu Christo, e non se poder ayudar e ser vencido de la delectación,
amonestado divynalmente en el coraçón, cortóse la lengua con los dientes e escupióla en
50 la cara de aquella muger mala. E atajó el deseo e sentimiento de la delectación con la
grandeza del dolor por que non venciase [fol. 97^{rb}] la torpedat de la luxuria al que non
vencieran las penas crueles e duras.

[IV] E en ese tiempo era acerca de la cibdat de Tebayda la más baxa Sant Paulo, el
primer hermitaño, de hedat de diez e seys años. E muertos ya el padre e la madre,
55 morava con una su hermana casada, e quedárale hereditat larga asaz. E era enseñado en
las letras de Egipto e en las griegas, e amava al Señor con muy manso coraçón. E
apartárase a una aldea a morar por la grant tenpestad de la persecución, mas ¿por qué
mucho se enseñoorea a los coraçones humanos la fanbre de la cobdicia? Començó el
marido de la hermana a querer descubrir al que deviera encobrir, e non le enbargavan de
60 tanto pecado las lágrimas de la hermana nin el debdo del parentesco nin el temor de
Dios que mira todas las cosas de alto. E trabajávase por poner en obra la su crueldat so
color de piedat. [fol. 97^{va}]

[V] E sintiendo aquesto, el mancebo muy sabio fuése fuyendo a un yermo desierto fasta
que oviese fin la persecución de aquel tiempo. E mudando la nescesydat en voluntad, e
65 fallando a la raíz de un monte una cueva que se cerrava con una piedra, quitó la piedra
e entró en ella, queriendo saber lo que estava dentro en ella. E desque entró, falló en ella
asaz anchura e que tenía encima una abertura, e salía por la abertura una palma muy
vieja que cobría con sus ramas la abertura que estava sobre la cueva, e que nascía en ella
una fuente muy clara, e que salía della un arroyo, e se sumía en la tierra fuera de la
70 cueva. E encima del monte estavan muchas casillas en que avía muchas yunques e
martillos e entalladuras de fazer moneda e mucho [fol. 97^{vb}] carbón e ceniza. E segunt
se falla en las ystorias de los egipcianos, en aquel lugar se fazia moneda
ascondidamente en el tiempo que Cleopatra, reyna de Egipto, tomó al enperador Antonio
por marido.

[VI] E el mancebo santo, pagado mucho de aquel lugar así como sy le fuese ofrescido
por provisión divinal, moró allí dende adelante en oración toda su hedat. E comía del
fruto de aquella palma vieja e vestíase de las fojas della. E por que esto non paresca a
alguno non podible, testigos me son Jhesu Christo e los sus ángeles, que yo vi dos
monjes en la parte del yermo que se junta con los moros acerca de Siria: que el uno
80 dellos avía treynta años que estava encerrado e se mantoviera todo aquel tiempo con pan
de cevada e agua cenosa, e el [fol. 98^{ra}] otro fazía su morada en un algibe viejo e comía
cada día cinco figos pasados solamente. Mas estas cosas parescerán non creýbles a los
que non creen ser todas las cosas podibles a los fieles.

[VII] E tornando agora a fablar de la materia que avía dexado: como ya Sant Paulo

85 oviese ciento e treze años e tuviese en la tierra vida celestial, e estoviese Sant Antonio
en otro yermo e oviese noventa años ya (segunt que el mismo Sant Antonio solía
afirmar), vínole un pensamiento a la voluntad *que* él fuera el primero monje que se
apartara al yermo a morar. E como después de aquesto se acostase a dormir la noche
siguiente, fuéle revelado divinalmente *que* estava en el yermo más adentro otro monje
90 mejor que él e de mayor perfección, e [fol. 98^{rb}] que lo fuese a buscar e vesitar. E
desque vino el alva, començó su camino el viejo onrrado para yr a buscar a Sant Paulo,
sustentando sus mienbros flacos sobre un palo. E desdeque vino al mediodía, començó el
sol a se encender con grant fervor, mas non cesava de caminar el santo viejo e dezía:
“Creo en el mi Dios, que él me mostrará al su siervo que me prometió.” E desdeque acabó
95 de dezir estas palabras, vido una animalia que avía medio onbre e medio cavallo, e la
llaman los poetas centauro. E veyéndola, fizo en su fuente la señal de la cruz del
Salvador, e preguntóle e dixo: “Díme a qué parte deste yermo mora el siervo de Dios.”
E la animalia començó a dezir entre dientes algunas palabras bárbaras en manera que
más parecía que regañava que non que fablava, e tendió la mano derecha e mostró [fol.
100 98^{va}] al varón santo la carrera. E dio luego a fuyr, e començó a correr tan ligeramente
que parecía que bolava. Non sabemos enpero sy le demostró el diablo aquella visión
por lo espantar o si suele aquel yermo engendrar las tales animalias.

[VIII] E espantándose el varón santo de aquesta animalia que viera, e yendo pensando
en ella, andava a grant priesa su carrera. E llegó a un valle ado avía muchas piedras e
105 vido a un onbrezillo pequeñuelo que tenía las narizes corvas e la fuente llena de
cornezuelos e los pies de cabra. E veyendo Santo Antón aquesta animalia, tomó el
escudo de la fee e la cota de la esperança. E la animalia tendió la mano, así como en
señal de paz, e dava a Sant Antón de los dátiles que levava. E veyendo esto el varón
santo, paróse e preguntóle qué cosa era. E respondióle [fol. 98^{vb}] la animalia e dixo: “Yo
110 só mortal, e uno de los moradores de aqueste yermo que los gentiles, engañados por
grant error, llaman faunos e sátiros e ýncubus, e adoran por dioses, e vó en enbaxada de
mi grey. E rogámoste que ruegues por nós al Señor común de todos, que sabemos que
vino tiempo ha a salvar el linaje humanal, e salió la su fama en toda la tierra.” E como
aquel onbrezillo dixiese estas cosas al varón santo, començó Sant Antón a llorar e a
115 regar su cara con muchas lágrimas, que le acarrear a la grandeza de la alegría por aquello
que oya, ca se gozava de la gloria del Salvador e de la muerte de Sathanás, e
maravillábase como entendiera sus palabras aquella animalia. E firiendo en la tierra con
el palo que levava, dezía: “¡Guay de ti, Alexandría, *que* dexas de adorar a Dios e adoras
las animalias espantosas! ¡Guay de ti, cibdat [fol. 99^{ra}] fornicaria! Ca, ¿qué dirás quando
120 las bestias adoran e conocen a Jhesu Christo e tú non lo conoces nin lo adoras?” E aún
non avía acabado estas palabras que dio a correr tan ligeramente aquella animalia que
parecía que bolava. E por que alguno non tenga ser aquesto cosa non creyble: en tiempo
del enperador Constancio, se dize por testimonio de todo el mundo, que fue traýdo a
Alexandría un tal onbrezillo bivo; e fue levado, por grant maravilla, muerto e salado por
125 que non fediese por el grant calor, a la cibdat de Antiochía para que lo viese el
enperador, que estava en Antiochía a esa sazón.

[IX] Mas tornando a lo que avía dexado: començó el santo varón a yr por el camino que
avía començado, fallando solamente las pisadas de las animalias e veyendo muy grant

desierto. E non sabiendo [fol. 99^{rb}] qué fazer nin adó yr, avía fiuzia que non sería
 130 desanparado de Jhesu Christo. E pasado ya el segundo día e viniendo la noche, púsose
 en oración fasta que pareció el alva. E al alva vido alexos una loba que yva con grant
 sed fazia la raíz de un monte, e començó a yr en pos della. E llegó la loba a beber
 acerca de la cueva ado estava Sant Paulo. E desde ovo bevido e se fue, llegóse Sant
 135 Antonio a la cueva e començó a acatar lo que estava dentro en ella, mas non podía veer
 cosa alguna por la mucha escureza. E porque segunt dize la escriptura divinal “la caridat
 acabada fuera lança el temor”, començó a retener el resollo e a se llegar a la cueva paso
 a paso e a escuchar. E parándose a ratos muchas vezes, escuchava si podría oír alguna
 cosa. E a poco de espacio vido alexos un poco de claridat e començó a aguijar más. E
 140 entropoçó en una [fol. 99^{va}] piedra e fizo ruydo con ella. E oyéndolo, el bienaventurado
 Sant Paulo cerró la puerta. E veyendo esto, Sant Antón echóse a la puerta de fuera e
 rogava al varón santo con grant afincio que le pluguiese de le abrir. E estóvole rogando
 fasta la ora de sesta o más e dezía: “Tú sabes quién só yo e de dónde vengo e por qué.
 Sé que non meresco ver la tu cara, mas enpero non me partiré de aquí fasta que la vea.
 Tú, que rescibes las bestias, ¿por qué desechas al onbre? Busquéte e falléte e llamo por
 145 que me abras. E si non lo meresciere alcançar de ty, aquí moriré delante de aquesta tu
 puerta; e sy ál non, enterrarás la mi carne desde fuere muerta.” E diziendo estas cosas
 estava quedo e non se mudava de un lugar. E Sant Paulo, veyendo su afincio,
 respondióle e dixo: “Non demanda alguno con amenazas nin faze alguno [fol. 99^{vb}]
 fuerça con lágrimas, e por ende non te maravilles si non te rescibo mayormente, pues
 150 que veniste a morir segunt dizes.” E abrióle la puerta con cara alegre e abraçáronse
 anbos con toda caridat, e saludáronse por sus nonbres e dieron gracias a Dios.

[X] E asentáronse después que se ovieron abraçado e dixo Sant Paulo: “¡Cata aquí aquél
 que buscaste con tan grant trabajo! ¡Cata aquí los mienbros podridos con vejez e
 cobiertos de mucha canez! ¡Cata aquí el onbre que se tornará en polvo muy en breve! E
 155 porque la caridat sufre todas las cosas, ruégote que me digas agora cómo se ha el linaje
 humanal, e sy se fazen cosas nuevas en las cibdades antiguas e viejas, e quién se
 enseñoorea agora en el mundo, e sy han quedado aún algunos de los que [fol. 100^{ra}] eran
 engañados del error del diablo.” E ellos estando fablando estas cosas, vieron venir a un
 cuervo e posarse en una rama de la palma. E descendiendo della, volando mansamente,
 160 puso un pan entero delante de ellos e fuése luego. E el cuervo ydo, dixo Sant Paulo a
 Santo Antón: “El Señor piadoso e misericordioso nos ha enbiado de comer segunt agora
 vees, ca sesenta años ha que me trae este cuervo medio pan; mas agora enbiónos, por la
 tu venida, doblada la ración el Nuestro Señor e Salvador.”

[XI] E desde ovieron dado gracias a Dios, asentáronse a la orilla de la fuente e
 165 començaron a contender piadosamente quién partiría el pan. E estovieron en esta
 piadosa contienda fasta las viésperas, ca Sant Paulo dezía a Sant Antonio que lo devía él
 partir pues que era huésped, e Sant [fol. 100^{rb}] Antonio dezía a Sant Paulo que lo devía
 de partir él por la hedat. E a la postre acordaron que asiesen amos del pan e tirase cada
 uno dellos fazia sy e tomase cada uno su parte. E fiziéronlo asy. E desde ovieron
 170 comido, ynclináronse a la fuente a beber algunt poco de agua, e ofrescieron luego a
 Dios sacreficio de alabança e velaron toda la noche en oraciones. E desde vino el día,
 dixo el bienaventurado Sant Paulo a Sant Antonio: “Días ha que sabía que moravas en

este yermo, e prometióme el Señor que te vería antes que muriese. E agora acerca es el
175 tiempo de mi muerte e lo *que* yo desee sienpre. Conviene saber, ser suelto del atamiento
de la carne e yr a bivar *con Jhesu Christo* en la gloria perdurable. Ca acabado ya el
tiempo de mi vida, non me *queda* de alcançar sinon la corona de justicia. E tú eres
enbiado de Dios para que [fol. 100^{va}] entierres esta carne mesquina e ascondas la tierra
en la tierra.”

[XII] E oyendo esto, el bienaventurado Sant Antonio començó a gemer e llorar e a le
180 rogar que non le quisiese desanparar, e que le quisiese levar por conpañero de aquel
camino que avía de *andar*. E respondióle Sant Paulo e dixo: “Amigo, non debes *querer*
lo que non es tuyo mas lo de *Jhesu Christo*, ca a ti mucho sería provechoso dexar la
carga del cuerpo e seguir al cordero, mas conviene a los frayres que quedes aún acá para
los enformar por el tu enxienplo. E por ende, si non te es grave, ve e tráeme el manto
185 que te dio el obispo Atanasio para que enbuelvas mi cuerpo en él e lo entierres.” E
aquesto dezía el bienaventurado Sant Paulo non porque avía *grant* cuydado que fuese su
cuerpo enterrado, ca muy poco le dava que podreciese enterrado o desenterrado pues
que tan *grant* tienpo avía estado [fol. 100^{vb}] vestido de fojas de palmas, mas por que se
partiese Sant Antón dél e non estoviese presente a la su muerte. E Santo Antonio,
190 maravillándose de lo que le dezía el varón santo de Sant Atanasio e del manto, e
onrrando a *Jhesu Christo* en el pecho de Sant Pablo e non se atreviendo a le contraddezir,
llegóse a él, llorando en silencio, e besóle las manos e los ojos e tornóse al monesterio
que fue después destoýdo de los moros. E tanto levava el deseo de tornar que *non* podía
andar quanto codiciava la su voluntad, mas vencía con el coraçón la hedat e el cuerpo
195 que estava flaco por los ayunos e los mienbros que estavam *quebrantados* por los
muchos años.

[XIII] E cansado e resollando, llegó a su casilla. E veyéndolo dos sus discípulos que lo
servían en su vejez, saliéronlo a rescebir, diziendo: “¿Adó as [fol. 101^{ra}] estado, padre?”
E respondióles él e dixo: “¡Guay de mí, pecador, que lievo sobre mí falso nonbre de
200 monje! Ca yo vi a Elýas e a Sant Johán en el desierto, mas vi a Paulo *en* paraýso.” E
firiéndose en los pechos e apretando la boca, sacó de la celda el manto que le diera Sant
Atanasio. E rogándole sus discípulos que les dixiese más claramente qué era aquello
que les dezía, respondióles e dixo: “Tienpo ay de fablar e tienpo ay de callar.”

[XIV] E saliendo fuera e non *queriendo* comer cosa alguna, tornóse por la carrera que
205 viniera, deseando solamente veer a Sant Paulo, e abraçándolo con los ojos e con el
coraçón, ca temía lo que acaesció: conviene saber, que daría el *espíritu* a *Jhesu Christo*
antes que pudiese bolver a él. E otro día, *quedándole* de andar camino de espacio de tres
oras, vido subir a [fol. 101^{rb}] Sant Paulo, blanco así como la nieve, e claro entre
muchedunbre de ángeles, e entre los coros de los profectas e de los apóstolos. E
210 derribándose en tierra, echava de la arena sobre su cabeça e llorava e plañía e dezía:
“¿Por qué me dexas, Paulo? ¿Por qué te vas syn despedir de mí? ¡Tarde por cierto te
conoscí e mucho ayña te perdí!”

[XV] E dezía después Sant Antonio que con tanta ligereza andudiera aquello que le
quedava de aquella carrera *que* más le parecía que bolava que non que andava. E

215 desde que llegó a la cueva, entró en ella e vido el cuerpo del bienaventurado Sant Paulo
estar de rodillas, e alçada la cabeça, e estendidas las manos al cielo. E veyéndolo asý
estar, pensó que aún bivía e orava, e esperó un poco de espacio. E desde non lo oyó
sospirar segunt que solía, entendió que era muerto e que el cuerpo del santo varón
estava aún con jesto [fol. 101^{va}] del cuerpo orando al Señor, al qual biven todas las
220 cosas que son. E llegóse a él e començó a llorar e a lo abraçar e besar.

[XVI] E sacó el cuerpo fuera e enbolviólo en el manto que traxiera, e cantó los salmos,
que en los tales oficios acostunbran dezir los *christianos*. E avía grant tristeza porque
non tenía açadón con que pudiese cavar la tierra. E rebolvía en su coraçón diversos
pensamientos e non fallava remedio e dezía: “Si quisiere tornar al monesterio, mucho
225 me tardaré, ca ay tres días de andadura; e sy quisiere quedar aquí, non aprovecharé cosa
alguna, pues moriré aquí, Señor Jhesu Christo, cerca de aqueste tu cavallero, e enbiaré a
ti el postrimero espíritu, segunt que es cosa digna.” E como estoviesse pensando estas
cosas en su coraçón, salieron dos leones, corriendo de la parte de dentro del yermo,
alçándoseles las crines por los pescueços. E [fol. 101^{vb}] veyéndolos, el varón santo fue
230 muy espantado, mas alçó al Señor su coraçón e viniéronse luego a él asý como palomas
mansas e perdió el temor. E llegaronse al cuerpo del bienaventurado viejo e paráronse a
los pies, meneando las colas, e echáronse delante él algunt poco de espacio, bramando
muy de rezio en manera que qualquier pudiera entender que fazían llanto por el varón
santo. E apartáronse algunt poco e començaron a cavar la tierra e echar fuera el arena. E
235 fizieron una fuesa que podría abastar asaz para un cuerpo humanal. E asý como sy
demandaran gualardón de su trabajo, abaxaron las cervizes, e meneando las cabeças e
las orejas, allegáronse a Santo Antón e besáronle los pies e las manos. E entendiendo
Santo Antón que le demandavan la bendición, [fol. 102^{ra}] alçó el su coraçón a loar al
Salvador, porque aún las animalias non razonables conoscían el su poderío non afinable.
240 E dixo: “Señor, non cae una foja de un árbol sin tu voluntad nin muere un páxaro syn tu
querer, tú da a estos leones lo que tú sabes que les conviene.” E fizoles señal con la
mano que se fuesen, e ellos fuéronse. E el santo viejo tomó el cuerpo de Sant Paulo
acuestas e metiólo en la fuesa e cubriólo de tierra. E otro día tomó la saya de palma que
Sant Paulo tenía vestida quando bivía, que era fecha a manera de espuerta, e levóla
245 consigo a su monesterio, por que asý como piadoso heredero, non quedase ajeno de los
bienes que dexara el santo viejo. E desde que llegó a su monesterio, contó a sus discípulos
por or[den] [fol. 102^{rb}] todo que le acaesciera. E vestíase sienpre en los días solepnos de
Pasqua e de Pentecostés la saya de palma que de Sant Paulo heredara.

[XVII] E plazer me ha de preguntar agora en fin de aquesta obrezilla pequeña a los que
250 han grandes riquezas e hedifican grandes palacios de mármoles e de otras piedras, e
allegan mucha plata e mucho oro e fazen grandes thesoros, ¿qué fallestió a este
bienaventurado viejo que estava medio desnudo en la cueva de aquel yermo? Vosotros
bevedes en vasos de oro e de plata apostados de piedras muy presciadas, e Sant Paulo
satisfazía a la sed natural beviendo del agua con sus manos anbas. Vosotros, ricos,
255 amadores del mundo, avedes vestiduras texidas con oro e con plata, e este santo varón
aun non avía la más vil vestidura de alguno [fol. 102^{va}] de los menores de vuestros
servidores. Mas a este bienaventurado pobrezillo fuéle abierto el paraýso, e a vosotros
está presto el fuego del ynfierno. Aqueste pobrezillo guardó en sý desnudo la vestidura

- de Jhesu *Christo*, e vós, estando vestidos de seda, perdistés la vestidura que Jhesu
 260 *Christo* vos diera. Paulo yaze en la tierra, cobierto de tierra, e espera la resurrección de la
 gloria avenidera, e vós estades en sepulcros costosos e fermosos de piedra e arderedes
 con *vuestras* riquezas en el fuego de la pena avenidera. Ruégovos que *perdonedes*, sy ál
 non, a las riquezas que amades, e non enbolvades *vuestros* muertos en vestiduras de oro
 e de grant prescio. ¿Por qué non cesa aún la *vuestra* cobdicia mala entre el lloro e las
 265 lágrimas? E por ventura, ¿non saben podrescer los cuerpos de los ricos sinon en seda e
 en paños [fol. 102^{vb}] muy presciados?

[XVIII] Ruego a qualquier que esto leyere que se acuerde de mí, Jerónimo, pecador, ca
 sy el Señor me otorgase lo *que* desea el mi coraçón, mucho antes escogería la saya de
 aqueste Paulo con sus merescimientos que las púrpuras de los reyes con sus regnos.

- 270 [XIX] Aquí acaba la estoria de la vida de Sant Paulo, el primer hermitaño, a honrra e
 gloria del *Nuestro* Salvador, el qual con el Padre e con el *Spíritu* Santo bive e regna
 para sienpre un Dios. AMÉN.

Critical Apparatus

Incipit] De la vida de Sant Paulo, el *A* : Aquí comiença la istoria del bienaventurado Sant
 Pablo *B* *que* escribió el bienaventurado Sant Jerónimo *A* : *om.* *B*

5] e *A* : o *B* començó *A* : començava *B*

8] al *A* : el *B*

10] afirman *A* : afranan *B*

16] mentira *A* : materia *B*

17] de *A* : *om.* *B*

24–25] De la vida de Sant Paulo, primero hermitaño, que escribió el bienaventurado Sant
 Jerónimo *A* : *om.* *B*

28–29] fueron martirizados por el nonbre del Salvador *A* : fuera entonces en deseo por el
 nonbre del Salvador avía *B*

30] seguidores *B* : perseguidores *A*

30–31] por degollar las almas que *A* : *om.* *B*

37] atadas *A* : e atadas *B*

37–38] el que *B* : que *A*

38] por las *A* : e por otras *B* ardiendo *A* : ardientes *B* otro *A* : aun otro *B*

39] floreció *A* : florecía *B*

41] e *A* : *om.* *B*

45] lo *A* : le *B*

54] hedat *A* : la hedat *B*

55] morava – added in margin larga asaz *A* : asaz larga *B*

57] apartárase *A* : apartávase *B*

59] le *A* : lo *B*

60] de tanto pecado las *B* : las *A*

61] que mira todas las cosas de alto *B* : *om.* *A* trabajávase *A* : travájase *B* la *A* : *om.* *B*

66] dentro *A* : *om.* *B*

67] e salía por la abertura *A* : *om.* *B*

- 68] en ella *A* : *om. B*
76] adelante *A* : en adelante *B*
80] todo aquel tienpo *A* : *om. B*
82] non *A* : solamente non *B*
83] fieles *A* : creyentes *B*
84] fablar de *A* : *om. B*
85–86] e tuviese en la tierra vida celestial, e estoviese Sant Antonio en otro yermo e oviese noventa años *A* : *om. B*
87] fuera *A* : era *B*
90] mayor *A* : mejor *B*
93] viejo *A* : varón *B*
94] al *A* : el *B*
95] avía *A* : era *B*
97] deste *A* : de aqueste *B*
99] regañava *A* : más regañava *B*
101] sy *A* : se *B*
104] a un *A* : al (?) *B*
106] e *A* : e tenía *B*
109] qué cosa *A* : quién *B* la *A* : el *B*
110] e *A* : *om. B*
112] por nós al Señor común de todos *A* : al Señor común de todos por nós *B*
115] de la *A* : del *B*
116] de la gloria del *A* : del *B*
119] ca *A* : *om. B*
121] adoras *A* : lo adoras *B* non – added in margin
127] santo varón *A* : varón santo *B*
132] fazia *A* : faza *B* començó *A* : començó con los ojos *B*
134] a *A* : *om. B* dentro *A* : *om. B*
136] llegar *A* : allegar *B*
139] lo – added in margin
142] só yo *A* : yo só *B*
143] ver *A* : ver ver *B*
146] de aquesta *A* : esta *B*
150] E *A* : E así burlando *B*
153] tan *A* : *om. B*
154] mucha canez *A* : muchas canas *B*
155] ha *A* : ha ya *B*
168] de partir él *A* : él partir *B*
169] fazia *A* : faza *B*
173] este *A* : aqueste *B*
179] le *A* : lo *B*
180] le *A* : lo *B*
182] non *B* : *om. A*
184] tráeme *A* : trae *B*
185] que enbuelvas *A* : en que buelvas *B*
203] e *A* : él e *B*

- 207] de *A* : aun de *B*
 217] aún *A* : aún pensava que *B*
 218] que *A* : *om. B* santo varón *A* : varón santo *B*
 220] abraçar e *A* : *om. B*
 222] dezir *A* : a dezir *B*
 223] rebolvía *A* : resolvía *B*
 232] meneando *A* : maneando *B*
 234] santo *A* : *om. B* e *A* : e a *B*
 237] allegáronse *A* : llegáronse *B*
 242] e ellos fuéronse *A* : *om. B*
 247] por orden *A* : *om. B* solepnes *A* : *om. B*
 255] santo varón *A* : varón santo *B*
 257] vosotros *B* : nosotros *A*
 266] muy *A* : *om. B*
 269] de aqueste *A* : deste *B*
 270–72] Aquí acaba la estoria de la vida de Sant Paulo, el primer hermitaño, a honrra e gloria del Nuestro Salvador, el qual con el Padre e con el Spíritu Santo bive e regna para sienpre un Dios. AMÉN. *B* : *om. A*